

The Pocahontas Times.

Andrew & Norman Price, Owners.

"Montani Semper Liberi!"

Andrew Price, Editor

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"Ah! What a Sound Will Rise"

Ah! what a sound will rise, how wild and dreary,
When the death angel touches those swift keys!

What loud lament and dismal Misereve
Will mingle with their awful symphonies.

Is it, O man, with such discordant noises,
With such accursed instruments as these,
Thou drownest Nature's sweet and kindly voices,
And jarrest the celestial harmonies?

Were half the power that fills the world with terror;
Were half the wealth bestowed on camps and courts,
Given to redeem the human mind from error,
There were no need of arsenals or forts.

The warrior's name would be a name abhorred!
And every nation that should lift again
Its hand against a brother, on its forehead
Would wear forevermore the curse of Cain!

Down the dark future, through long generations,
The echoing sounds grow fainter and then cease;
And like a bell, with solemn sweet vibrations,
I hear once more the voice of Christ say, "Peace."

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

XVI.

County Sketches.

THE MENNONITES.

The Wagner Church stood upon the top of a slight rise hardly large enough to be called a hill. It was surrounded by a large church-yard in which rested the remains of many people. The church building itself was of the most severely plain type of architecture, standing four square without a sign of any attempt at ornamentation. A steeple would have caused the building to be considered unfit for a house of worship. A bell would have been a signal that the depravity of the world was upon them. But the church was well painted and the church yard well kept; and upon the whole it was more attractive than a weather-beaten church with a bell and steeple and a weedy church-yard.

Inside there was no paint. There could be no reason why paint should be applied to the inside. The immense building presented, it seemed, acres of blank boarded walls and ceilings. The seats were severely plain and comfortable. Down the middle in the approved style ran a row of pillars which in turn were connected with railings effectually fencing off the two sexes. The women went in by a door to the right and the men to the left.

Across the end of the building was a long pulpit of the plainest type and behind that a bench upon which the preachers sat. Sometimes there were as many as a dozen preachers present and all took part in the services. One would rise and address the congregation and sit down when the spirit ceased to move him. Thus the discourse need not be continued after the preacher's ideas have been worn threadbare. Stretching five minute ideas into thirty minute sermons has caused much needless suffering in churches.

These preachers were chosen by lot. They pursued the daily avocations of life in mill or shop or field, and on Sunday dressed in their quaker clothes. They arose and said the words that were given them to speak. They received no salary.

To describe the sect let us tell of sober, prosperous, consistent Christians, who honestly and faithfully tried to live up to their faith in word, thought, and deed. A faith that taught that health, happiness, and wealth belonged to the toilers of the field. That taught of sober and frugal lives that made them rich and prosperous and which caused them to acquire acre after acre until there was no room for the more profligate, slave holding Virginians. Their maxim as farmers was that the farmer builds the barn and the barn builds the house. Their pride was to have no pride.

One summer Sunday when the light ran across the billows of the waving grain, a vast concourse of people were gathered at the Wagner chapel. They passed into the meeting house, dressed in the richest fabrics but all the colors subdued and harmonious. That young man with a cheap watch chain across his vest, or that girl with a bow of cherry ribbon were mourned over as degenerates. The men hung their hats on the fence between the two sexes and made it still more difficult for the staid young men and the sedate young women to exchange glances.

Bravely up to the front walked old Jacob Hoffman. A tall, strikingly handsome old man of sixty-eight. He owned the biggest barns and the most fertile acres in the community. Up rises Emanuel Finkbinder, the miller. The two smooth shaven men give each other a salute which makes the whole room ring. "Greet each other with a holy kiss!" Those church kisses always evoked of too great a power of action. Too much like a "clapboard rudely ripped from the side of an empty shed."

A new preacher was to be chosen from the flock that day. A dozen men had been deemed eligible and they sat upon the long front bench where the brethren and sisters sat when they performed their solemn function of public feet-washings. From the annex where the mothers hushed their wailing babies on meeting days Martin Hartzel advanced with a armful of plain black bound Bibles, which were piled indiscriminately upon a small table in front of the pulpit, and they were "shuffled" (if we may be allowed the use of that expression) by another minister, and when the proper time came each one of the candidates advanced and solemnly took a Bible and remained with it in his hands until Hartzel came forward and opened the books until he found the slip of paper which decided the result of the drawing.

Fate destined that Moses Henschel, blacksmith, was to be inducted into the holy office, and thereafter he was to beat out sermons to the music of the anvil.

Rich Jacob Hoffman sat at the end of the line. His intellectual face was drawn with the emotion that shook his whole being. He was a man whom nature seemed to have especially endowed with the qualities of a spiritual leader. Benevolent, pure minded, thoughtful, well informed, a powerful speaker, a winning man. For forty years at least once a year his name had been first called as an eligible, and in all that time he had never drawn the slip that would have qualified him to have lifted up his voice in the meeting house. It was incomprehensible to others, but he himself was bowed down with his sense of unworthiness. He had taken the last book and once more he had found that there was one more fit. The blacksmith, whom no man had ever heard speak in public, was preferred before him.

Martin Hartzel got into the carriage with Emanuel Finkbinder. It was once considered a great honor to drive in pleasure carriages, but that day had passed away. Even Hartzel, a visiting minister from Pennsylvania, saw no harm in riding in a carriage. But there were other signs of spiritual decay about the Wagner Church people that he did not approve. He was a great stickler to the old forms and customs of the church, and wished to preserve all of those apparently immaterial practices which distinguished his people from the carnally minded. He was a short, spare man, with a shrewd face. He had a wonderful gift of speaking and he preached of the glory of his church, and set himself against any change in the ritual.

Miller Finkbinder, a preacher whom the spirit rarely moved to preach, was just the opposite; and especially was he doubtful about the wisdom of selecting shepherds of the flock by lot. A sense of his own peculiar unfitness to voice the faith that was in him may have had much to do with it. Try as he would he could not preach, and

he felt that he was not qualified for his position. He gave voice to some of his heresy to the evangelist:

"Once more Brother Hoffman has failed to draw the slip. It makes me almost doubt the wisdom of the church in choosing them by lot."

"Say not so, Brother Finkbinder! Be sure that there is an Hand in this work that never errs."

"But think what a powerful man Jacob Hoffman is! What a grand speaker and what a good man! He has failed to be chosen, and I who am stricken dumb have been a preacher for over twenty years."

"There is something beneath the surface, Brother Finkbinder. The heart of a man is a thing past finding out. Let us go home with Jacob Hoffman and talk with him."

"I am afraid it is a sore subject." Just then they turned into the lane that led to Jacob Hoffman's house. That worthy gentleman rode in behind them, pondering deeply on the recent event. His pretty daughter stopped her horse and told her sweetheart who was riding with her:

"You can't come in to-day John. Father is so cast down every time they draw a preacher that it is awful to see him. I feel so sorry for him. And there goes those two preachers and I know its going to be a bad time at our house this evening. So good-bye, John, and come next Saturday, John; and charge this Sunday up to the loss of the ledger, John."

The Sunday dinner was a solemn affair. When the three men were together after dinner the evangelist broached the delicate subject:

"Brother Hoffman, we have all noticed the wonderful manifestation of Providence in your candidacy for the ministry. We are plain people and plain words are the best. Do you know of anything in your past life—any wrong you have done for which you have not made reparation—that would unfit you for the high and holy calling in the light of the Searcher of Hearts. Your fellow men know of nothing. Your life to them is without blemish."

"Brethren, you have made it easier for me to tell you what has been in my mind to confess for years, and I solemnly believe that the hand of God is heavy upon me to make me right a wrong."

"When my father died, forty years ago next August, I was his only child. He had raised Thomas Steele, who was two years older than myself. My father and I had quarreled about a young lady whom I thought I would marry, and I went to the West—to Ohio. I believe that we would have been reconciled, more especially as I found out very shortly that father had judged the character of the girl correctly and that she was not fit to marry an honest man. He saved me, as it was, from the worst fate that can befall a man."

"I had not been gone two weeks until father fell dead in his room. I was sent for and in the course of a few weeks reached home. Steele met me and told me that father had told him after I had gone away that he would make him his heir. I was prepared for such a thing and asked to see the will. He said there was no will, but in a high handed way said he would hold by the promise father had made, and tried to browbeat me. We both took counsel and of course found that he had no claims except under a will. He renewed the search, and my father's administrator and others assisted. Then Steele tried to bring the matter before the church, but they would have nothing to do with it. Then Steele grossly insulted me and we parted in anger."

"Steele died twenty years ago. He died drunk, after a mispent life. I have provided for his widow and educated his daughter."

"They bless the ground you walk on," said Emanuel.

"But I have suffered all my life, Emanuel, and have never found any enjoyment in the ownership of my property. After all the searches for a will had failed I was

put in possession of my father's property just as it stood. He had no debts and there was no sale. I have known the place where father would have kept a will if he had ever made one, and for all these dreary years have never looked there. That is his desk in the corner. I have used it ever since his death. There is a compartment in it that has never been examined where he kept any papers he wished to keep secret. There is probably money in it as well, for no money of any amount was found. This evening we will look for a will, and if we find one I will abide by it if it leaves me without a dollar to my name."

The three men went to the desk. There was a drawer that the old man opened seemingly to its fullest extent. Then pressing upon the head of a brass screw which was in the side of the drawer, pulled it out a few inches farther and disclosed a small compartment. In it was a lot of gold and silver money and a small paper. It proved to be the will. Hartzel opened it with eager fingers and read:

"I leave everything to my son, Jacob Hoffman, all my goods and chattels, lands and tenements, and my silver watch, and everything, and request that he pay Thomas Steele who has lived with us \$1000, if he does not consider it too much a charge on him, and to the said Thomas Steele I give his pick of a horse and saddle and bridle, one cow, and two feather beds. This my last will and testament. My son Jacob Hoffman is now in the west but I write this will and say my love and affection for him is the same. This August 1, 1849. GILBERT HOFFMAN. Sound mind and retentive memory."

Jacob Hoffman's eyes were wet. It was a message from the father, who had died while they were parted. What a comfort he had missed during his life! That secret drawer which had haunted him his whole life contained all the time what he needed most to make him a happy man. His bleeding conscience had made him a humble and perhaps a better man, but now he had no secret to weigh him down.

He made the fullest reparation. He sold a farm and paid the widow and her daughter the principal and interest, with them protesting that it ought not to be. He did more. He confessed the whole and Jacob Hoffman stood fairer in his country than ever, if such a thing was possible.

The snow is on the ground. Once more the alert evangelist, Martin Hartzel visits the Wagner Church, and tells the people to stand fast to the traditions of their fathers, to preserve the church in its purity, to abjure all pride, and to be true disciples of Simon Menno, the contemporary of Martin Luther.

Once more lots are to be cast and a preacher selected. Once more Jacob Hoffman, grand in his humility, takes the lowest seat and the last Bible, and sits with it in his trembling hands, the picture of self-abasement. Once more Martin Hartzel, with a certain eagerness, advances and takes the book from Jacob Hoffman's hands, and finds the slip. A murmur goes through the great congregation, and a palsied octogenarian, standing on the confines of the world, in broken sentences, tells of this manifestation of the Holy Spirit.

When Martin Hartzel got a half mile from the church he found he had forgotten his saddlebags which he had placed in the annex. He rode back and took the key from the old sexton, who was hobbling along on foot, and entered the building.

Little Abe Wright had been on needles and pins ever since he ate his dinner in the little frame hut near the church. He and his terrier had tracked a rabbit into the stone foundation of the church. No sooner was the last man gone until he was at the back side of the church and the terrier was industriously putting the game back and forth under the building to make it break cover. Little Abe idly put his eye to the window of the annex and there he saw the strange preacher deftly taking small slips of paper out of some small Bibles.

Report of George C. Underhill, of Vermont, on the Great Marble Deposit of Pocahontas County.

To Hon. W. L. McNeel, Capt. A. M. Edgar, George S. McNeel, A. R. Smith, Marshall & McGraw, P. S. Clark, and others in interest of Marble Mountain, Academy, Pocahontas County, West Virginia.

GENTLEMEN—This is to say that having been employed by you to visit your property for the purpose of ascertaining the facts pertaining to its value for marble purposes, would report as follows:

A careful study of your outcroppings indicates, first, that there are several miles of fossiliferous marble strata, perhaps five or six, exposed to plain view most of the distance, and nowhere covered by more than a few feet of debris; the vein is at least forty feet thick and lies nearly horizontal at all points, coursing through and through the low range of hills wherein it is located.

There is no possible way to determine the full depth of the stratum except by core drill or uncovering the exposure to a greater depth than has been attempted, or by actual excavation, nor does it much matter whether it be proven of a greater depth than shown by outcroppings, for there is already more marble in sight than has ever been used during all the ages. This is in no sense extravagant or overdrawn. An excavation 2,000 feet square and 40 feet deep would produce 80,000,000 cubic feet of merchantable marble, (assuming that one-half the excavation be debris,) and I seriously doubt if that enormous gross total has been produced since the beginning of time for while the world's production now aggregates perhaps 4,000,000 cubic feet annually, it is only of late that even 1,000,000 was used, and it is probable that 100,000 feet would cover the production fifty years ago and proportionately less as we go back. Thus it will be seen that with an area of several miles square available, it is not very important to know accurately whether the depth be 40 or 140; more especially as a 40-foot strata can be economically worked.

In quality this marble may be divided into two general grades: the one ranging from the richest red to the deepest maroon color; while the other may be called dove colored, richly marked with white mottling and dark veins.

Perhaps the most important query is as to the condition of this vast mass, for many deposits that are otherwise desirable are so unbound and broken by eruption and upheaving forces as to be rendered worthless.

A word as to the methods of its presentation above the present adjacent country-side will make plain that no great strain could have obtained. The contour of the immediate country surrounding Marble Mountain, taken in connection with all the exposed rocks, makes it morally sure that the hills in question were forced up from the original level—the level where the depositing took place—without tilting or contortion, just as the some force should operate directly upon a piece of level meadow land so as to lift it hundreds or thousands of feet above its natural surroundings, thus making an elevated table land or mesa, the top being undisturbed and level as before.

I have never seen like conditions except at Dorset, Vermont, where a large bed of low-grade marble and non-crystallized lime was forced up in a like manner. And where more than half a century's work on an extensive scale shows a practically sound and unbroken marble except in a few spots where it is locally injured, as in the case of the "Blue Ridge" and its immediate vicinity.

All exposures of the lower stones except in case of volcanic action, have been brought about by the shrinkage of the earth's crust and consequent shriveling, and the mountains and valleys thus formed may be compared to the ridges and furrows on thick cream in a milk pan. It will be seen that in such a contention of mighty forces but few large areas of mother rock would escape annihilation, or at least serious breakage. Except in cases like those at Dorset, Vt., and Academy, W. Va., where sections of rock escaped destruction through removal from active participation in the crush going all about them. I would not be understood that these are the only exceptions in the primary stones, for in many cases the shrinkage was so even and slow that equally sound stone may be found lifted on edge, but I recite these facts to show that such deposits are more apt to be commercially valuable than if brought to the surface one corner at a time.

The red and maroon marble referred to are counterparts almost of

marble found in Hawkins County, Tenn., and at Swanton, Vt., both valuable and much sought after. Many years ago the banisters and columns inside the Capitol Building at Washington were produced at great expense near Rogersville, in the former State, and are standing "ada" for this beautiful material.

The dove grey varieties have no known counterpart in this country at least, except in Colorado, where there is a somewhat similar vein. This marble is at once chaste and rich and would find a ready market wherever beauty is appreciated. Commercially, the future of Marble Mountain is largely dependent on a railway outlet, but as a valuable marble field is a great freight producer and in view of the recent discoveries of coal near by, it is not possible for the building of a railroad to be long delayed. Moreover, it is almost a wonder that a rich farming district like that bordering the Greenbrier River should have been so long overlooked by railroad men.

I may add that while with you I was shown one of the finest pieces of black marble I had ever seen, and a fine sample of Agate Onyx, both of which would aid in making a railroad pay through the valley. Finally, let me say, that under favorable conditions large returns are made from the production of marble, and I feel confident that when it is fully understood that you have large quantities of freight, some railway to the north or south of you will reach out for it and the rest will naturally follow.

Respectfully yours,
Geo. C. Underhill.

His Sense of Humor.

It is probably quite as irritating for an Englishman in this country to be told that his fellow countrymen cannot see a joke as it is for an American to hear in England that his fellow citizens are looked upon as "smart" to the verge of dishonesty. A very clever young Englishman who came to New York several months ago and whose sense of humor is quite acute, was ready to admit any charge against his countrymen, one afternoon last week. Mr. Liverpool, as he may be called, was invited to lunch with two New Yorkers to meet a fellow countryman who may be called Mr. London. London had been well coached beforehand. He was warned not to crack a smile for at least five minutes after a funny story was told, and both New Yorkers were primed with the latest stories out. Before the lunch each of them took occasion to say to Liverpool that his only complaint against the English was their slowness in seeing a joke. Shortly after the lunch began one of the Yorkers told an undeniably funny story, whose humor was obvious. When Liverpool had finished laughing at it he was surprised to see that London's face was perfectly solemn. The conversation became general, and suddenly London broke out in a laugh and remarked, "Oh, very funny! Very funny indeed. I see that joke. It was," &c., giving an explanation of it. London was an intelligent man and Liverpool looked at him in amazement. The other New Yorker told an even better story, to Liverpool's delight and London's apparent mystification. London pondered over this joke for fully five minutes, and then he laughed hard and explained it to show that he had not missed the point. Story followed story, and in each case London's laugh came out several minutes late. Then he purposely left the table for a few minutes, and the New Yorkers promptly called Liverpool's attention to London as a typical Englishman of intelligence who was dense as to a humorous story. Liverpool had to admit that London was slow and he was very much cast down at having his countryman bolster up the New Yorkers' argument so successfully. Liverpool was ready to admit anything when a story which had been rehearsed to London was told by Liverpool and London laughed even before the point, which might have been anticipated, came out. "Thank you, old chap," said Liverpool, shaking hands with him and cheering up. Then it was explained to him that London's denseness was assumed, and Liverpool was relieved that he proposed an Anglo-American alliance at his expense.—N. Y. Sun.

The Hobo's Wit.

It was a sad and seedy tramp, who struck a house for food. The farmer's wife replied, "All right; but saw me first some wood."

He shook his head and answered, with a loud guffaw: "Just tell that you saw me, but you never saw me saw."—Ex.

By stroke of childish enterprise. They grabbed the old hen's legs, and made her eat assorted dyes. To produce Easter eggs.—Judge.